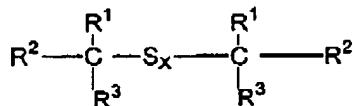


Amendment to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Claims 1-3. (Cancelled)

Claim 4. (Currently Amended) A method for the mastication of rubbers comprising the step of mixing said rubbers with a dialkyl polysulfide and optionally rubber chemicals and/or fillers, ~~process for preparing a masticated rubber mixture comprising the steps of adding a masticating agent comprising a dialkyl polysulfide to a rubber mixture, then mixing the masticated rubber with rubber chemicals and/or fillers and then optionally adding vulcanizing agents to the masticated rubber mixture, wherein said dialkyl polysulfide is a polysulfide of the formula~~



wherein

R¹ to R³ are identical or different and represent a linear or branched C₁-C₁₈-alkyl radical or represent hydrogen and
x represents the numbers 3 to 5.

Claim 5. (Currently Amended) A process-method according to Claim 4, wherein said dialkyl polysulfide is used in amounts of 0.1 to 10 phr, based on the total amount of said rubbers to be masticated.

Claim 6. (Currently Amended) A process-method according to Claim 4, wherein said rubber is selected from the group consisting of natural rubber (NR), styrene/butadiene copolymers (SBR), acrylonitrile/ butadiene copolymers (NBR), ethylene/propylene copolymers (EPDM) and fluorohydrocarbon rubbers.

Claim 7. (Currently Amended) A process-method according to claim 6, wherein said rubbers are selected from the group consisting of natural rubber and styrene/butadiene copolymers.

Claim 8. (Currently Amended) A process-method according to claim 4, wherein said dialkyl polysulfide is used in conjunction with metal-containing heterocyclic ring compounds.

Claim 9. (Currently Amended) A process-method according to claim 4, wherein prior to mixing with said rubbers, said dialkyl polysulfides are absorbed onto a solid inert carrier.

Claim 10. (Currently Amended) A process-method according to claim 9, wherein said solid inert carrier is selected from the group consisting of carbon blacks, dispersed silicas and silicates, metal oxides, metal carbonates, metal sulfates, metal hydroxides, and organic carrier materials.

Claim 11. (Currently Amended) A process-method according to claim 10, wherein said solid inert carrier is selected from the group consisting of silica and carbon black.